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VACA VALLEY RADIO CLUB

VACAVILLE, CALIFORNIA

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December 2012

President's Message

By Marcus Maclean, KI6WDX

The "Event" Day – December 21, 2012

Did everyone survive the torrential rains we had in the past week? Were any club members impacted from flooding or property damage? It's supposed to dry out for awhile according to the weather people and hopefully, it will continue to rain and fill up Lake Berryessa once again because without that lake, this county wouldn't be as it is and continues to be. In getting solicitations from the ARRL, they are promoting a nice reference and information book about how to get the most out of amateur radio if the only radio one has is an HT. One of the items the book mentions is the use of a portable antenna much like the antenna model I brought to one club meeting and talked about how easy it is to use the portable Yagi antenna to contact other hams via a satellite passing over your location or your QTH. I believe a decent number of club members have an HT, so this book would be of good reference to get the most out of the HT radio! My Arrow handheld Yagi antenna was purchased for about $75 + shipping.

Have you purchased a mobile radio for your vehicle and you're unsure what is the best approach to getting it installed? That's why with each week, the Net Control operator always makes an announcement to those members (or non-members) if they are in need of help or assistance in getting a radio installed. Is your vehicle paid for and you plan on keeping it? Then don't be afraid about drilling a hole in the vehicle's roof to m mount that needed antenna. There is the right way and the wrong way of doing this procedure. Don't let your ego and fear of the "unknown" keep you from enjoying amateur radio!!! Just because you have that almighty radio license doesn't mean that you shouldn't keep yourself from asking of help or assistance! That's what club members are here for – for those needing assistance in or of?

The coming weekend, I've invited both Chris, KD7TQO and Jerry, KD6WKY over to my QTH because I have the materials to install a nice rotatable Yagi set. I'm not sure if the Yagi pole is long enough to support a double set and by this I mean, will the pole accept a vertical pair for the 2 meter band and another pair for the 70 cm band? The Diamond Yagi antennas I have are super light weight and I think both pairs might just fit on one pole of reasonable length. With the metal tripod and two sets of 3 point guying, I should be able to point the antennas in the direction I want contact from and get it. Each antenna will supposedly handle 160 watts no matter the band selected, so I guess an amplifier is the next radio equipment item to buy! But now this project will be put on hold until my smashed, yes smashed index finger heals which came to be from trying to lift a piece of heavy equipment along with another person and got the finger in the way between the cabinet and the wood pallet. Is it so ever sore!

In talking with a fellow club officer, I think that this club should expand into having an up-to-date educational library. Such items as a current Technician, General and Extra license exam books including the CD disks. A nice CD disk set for those interested in learning Morse Code (CW). A video and written instructions about the virtues and operations regarding a handheld Yagi antenna a HT radio and how to use the free satellites passing overhead. And some information regarding the other modes of operation such as RTTY, PSK-31, PACTOR III and Slow Scan TV (SSTV). And what else? I hope those members took the time to involve their station with this past weekend's 10 meter ARRL sponsored contest. Next weekend is the Rookie Roundup in CW for those newly licensed in 2010, 2011 and 2012! I hope to see a great many of our club members at this year's Christmas Party to be held at Pietro's #2 on Merchant Street in Vacaville at 6:30 p.m. that includes door prizes and the grand prize drawing once again!!

Well, that's about all for the moment. Until next month, be safe, be well and G.O.T.A.! 73!

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Around the Shack

By Jerry Olive, KD6WKY

This is the time of year we have back to back to back contests on the radio. The HF bands are filled with radio amateurs doing their best to collect as many points as possible in whatever way that particular contest is designed. The biggie for me is the ARRL November Sweepstakes that takes place over two weekends in November. It is split into CW and Phone weekends.

Last year I did not participate in November Sweepstakes. We had pretty much demolished the interior of our house to resurface the ceilings, walls and floors. To do that everything had to be moved out of the house. Like most projects, it took longer than I had hoped. I'm pretty sure I was priming and painting newly textured ceilings and walls over the weekends of the November Sweepstakes. We got everything done and put back together when the floor was finished right around Thanksgiving weekend. I worked the 10 meter contest last year so I know the project was finished by then.

I finished first in the low power, unassisted, single operator category in the 10 meter contest in 2011. I think I had a bit over 400 log entries for that one, all CW. I had 15 or so DX contacts too. Back in 2008 at the bottom of the sun spot cycle, I think I might have had a total of 35 contacts, none outside of California. I could have done just as well with a CB radio.

In December the Radio Amateurs of Canada (RAC) have their RAC Winter Contest right around the first day of winter always on a Saturday. That one is a fun contest, only working Canadians.

VACA VALLEY RADIO CLUB—2010

ELECTED OFFICERS

President: Marcus Maclean, KI6WDX
Vice President: Chris Jones, KD7TQO
Secretary: Jerry Olive, KD6WKY
Treasurer: Bob Hewitt, K6HEW

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Director: Skip Lawson, AF6HC
Director: Tom Christman, KE6MDM
Director: Antonio Del Rio, N6ZGB
Director: Richard Craig, KI6MIB

APPOINTED POSITIONS

Net Control Chairperson: Vice President
Activities Chairperson: Board of Directors
Newsletter Editor: Jerry Olive, KD6WKY

New Years Eve and New Years Day is the Straight Key Night. I plan on activating my 1 watt QRP rig with the straight key on it to see how well I do. I have all the crystals I need to work a variety of frequencies using either my 40m/80m dipole or my GAP Titan DX multi-band vertical antenna. I hope to work some of you going slowly.

I finally worked someone in Afghanistan a few weeks ago. T6LG had been on the air on 40m CW every night for a couple of weeks but I could never seem to hear him well enough to work him. One evening he popped up on 20 meters CW so I flipped the switch on the amp, turned the beam north and finally worked him. That one is rare. He is on Log Book of the World too so I should be a confirmation pretty quickly.

The past few weeks there has been a DXpedition on St. Peter and St. Paul Rock in the South Atlantic off the coast of Brazil. Their call sign was PTØS. I don't want to seem critical of a DXpedition because they had some very difficult conditions to work with. What I found unusual was when conditions were finally favorable and the pile up was in full swing, the operator would go on a break all of a sudden. That seemed so strange. The window to work North America being wide open with great conditions and then stop! I worked these guys on 10m SSB, 10m CW, and 17m CW. I gave up trying on the other bands because I got frustrated with the poor operating behavior of several people.

I have thought over the years about getting a special Christmas Season QSL card but have never done it. I think this is the year I will put that together and have it for 2013. My thought is to send it out during December to whomever I work. I'll let you know how that turns out.

I worked the 10 meter contest this weekend off and on. This is a fun contest because I can do it with all the Christmas decorations around me in the house. This year the band was not a good as last year for some reason. I had more DX, but less domestic contacts.

I sent an email to the ARRL after the contest recommending that they add a rule where you must identify in the call area that you are working in. I had tons of contacts with call signs out of the area; it was ridiculous.

Logbook of the World is running a week behind for some reason. I have never seen it this back logged. Their press release says they had a virus or some kind of problem that they fixed, but the back log is huge. I've been holding off up loading any logs until the queue gets shorter.

See you all at the club Christmas party on Wednesday! 73!

W6VVR Christmas Party

Wednesday, December 12

6:30 PM Dinner

Pietro's #2
679 Merchant Street
Vacaville

Cost is $20 per person and includes tax and tip.

December Test Session

Our December ARRL/VEC test session is complete. Congratulations to Jerry Bowen KJ6SCC/AG and Frank Garay KJ6RWQ/AG who upgraded to General Class during this test session.

We had 10 people test with 8 people that either passed and received their Technician License or upgraded to General Class.

We made Jerry Bowen KJ6SCC/AG try the Amateur Extra exam so he could get a good look at it. Jerry will be back on that one.

Many thanks to all the club members that helped in a variety of ways to make this test session successful.

Corps wants new antenna to reduce shock risk

Marine Corps Times
By James K. Sanborn - Staff writer
Posted : Sunday Nov 11, 2012 11:44:51 EST

The Corps wants to field new radio antennas that will reduce the risk of electrocution for Marines who carry them around low-hanging wires in the war zone.

The 6- to 10-foot whip antennas currently used with many of the Marine Corps' radios provide good performance over long ranges, but their all-metal construction poses a substantial threat to dismounted Marines and those riding in vehicle turrets, officials with Marine Corps Systems Command noted in an Oct. 26 request for information from the defense industry. Any new antenna must be safer but not sacrifice performance, according to MARCORSYSCOM's requirements.

Electrocution is blamed for the deaths of at least five Marines in Afghanistan during fiscal 2011, which ended Sept. 30, according to data published online by the Naval Safety Center. Two were the result of whip antennas making contact with low-hanging power lines during foot patrols. A third involved a turret gunner being hit while in his vehicle. Two other Marines came in contact with live wires near a generator on base. Deployed units have used nonconductive telescoping poles mounted to the front of their vehicles to help warn turret gunners of power line contact and give them time to react. In some cases, these poles can also raise power lines, allowing Marines to pass safely underneath.

Leaders have devoted greater attention to the hazard during pre-deployment training, and they have required all pre-mission briefings for both mounted and dismounted operations to include discussions on avoiding power lines. Also important, according to senior leadership in theater, is that Marines develop familiarity with their area of operations and share knowledge about risks with other personnel and units.

Kansas Ham Issued $10,000 Fine for Operation of Unlicensed Broadcast Station

12/06/2012

On December 5, Glen Rubash, KC0GPV, of Dwight, Kansas, was issued a $10,000 fine for what the FCC called "willfully and repeatedly" violating Section 301 of the Communications Act of 1934, as amended by operating an unlicensed radio transmitter on the frequency 88.3 MHz in Manhattan, Kansas.

In response to a complaint, agents from the FCC's Kansas City Office used direction finding techniques to locate the source of radio frequency transmissions on the frequency 88.3 MHz. According to a ***Notice of Apparent Liability for Forfeiture*** issued on December 6, agents found an FM transmitting antenna mounted on a pole next to a residence in Manhattan, Kansas on September 26, 2012. The agents determined that the signals on 88.3 MHz exceeded the limits for operation under Part 15 of the Commission's rules and therefore required

THE VVRC WELCOMES YOU

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Wheelchair accessible

Visit the Repeater online courtesy of Bob K6HEW at:
http://www.jcis.net/~hewbob/vvrc
Club repeater in Vacaville:W6VVR 145.470 MHz(-) pl 127.3

The W6VVR net call is Tuesday evenings at 7pm on the club repeater. All are invited to participate in this weekly meeting on the air. 73!

Additional local repeaters
WV6F 224.200(-) WV6F 440.025(+)
W6OMF Repeater 224.540 MHz, PL 118.8 Hz.

a license. Part 15 sets forth the conditions and technical requirements under which certain radio transmission devices may be used without a license; specifically, **Section 15.239** provides that non-licensed broadcasting in the 88-108 MHz band is permitted only if the field strength of the transmission does not exceed 250 µV/m at 3 meters. The FCC noted that its records showed that no authorization was issued to Rubash, or to anyone else for operation of an FM broadcast station at or near this location.

The next day, agents from the Kansas City Office again used direction finding techniques to confirm if the station was still operating on 88.3 MHz from the same location, and found that it was. The agents, accompanied by the property owner, inspected the unlicensed station's antenna and transmitter located in a locked detached garage. "The property owner stated that he allowed Rubash to use the garage to operate the radio station and that he thought the operation was legal because Rubash told him that he was a licensed radio operator," the forfeiture order stated. "Later that same day, Rubash spoke to an agent from the Kansas City Office via telephone and confirmed that he was an Extra class amateur licensee (assigned call sign KC0GPV). Rubash also admitted that he purchased the radio transmitter and that the station had been on the air for two months. Rubash added that he would not voluntarily relinquish the transmitter if asked to do so." The FCC stated that this response demonstrated that Rubash had control over the station.

Section 503(b) of the Communications Act provides that any person "who willfully or repeatedly fails to comply substantially with the terms and conditions of any license, or willfully or repeatedly fails to comply with any of the provisions of the Act or of any rule, regulation, or order issued by the Commission thereunder" shall be liable for a forfeiture penalty. Section 312(f)(1) of the Communications Act defines "willful" as the "conscious and deliberate commission or omission of [any] act, irrespective of any intent to violate" the law." According to the FCC, the term "repeated" means the commission or omission of such act more than once or for more than one day.

In addition, Section 301 of the Communications Act states that "no person shall use or operate any apparatus for the transmission of energy or communications or signals by radio within the United States, except under and in accordance with the Act and with a license granted under the provisions of the Act." For the purposes of Section 301, the FCC noted that the word "operate" has been interpreted to mean both the technical operation of the station, as well as "the general conduct or management of a station as a whole, as distinct from the specific technical work involved in the actual transmission of signals." In other words, the use of the word "operate" in Section 301 captures not just the "actual, mechanical manipulation of radio apparatus," but also operation of a radio station generally. To determine whether an individual is involved in the general conduct or management of the station, the FCC noted that it can consider whether such individual exercises control over the station, which it has defined to include "...any means of actual working control over the operation of the [station] in whatever manner exercised."

The FCC found sufficient evidence to establish that Rubash violated Section 301 of the Communications Act. Additionally, "because Rubash is a licensed Extra class amateur operator, he presumably was aware (or should have been aware) that operation of the radio transmitter required a license. The foregoing facts indicate that Rubash consciously operated and/or otherwise was involved in the general conduct or management of the unauthorized station."

Pursuant to the Commission's *Forfeiture Policy Statement* and **Section 1.80** of the rules, the FCC found that the base forfeiture amount for operation without an instrument of authorization is $10,000. In assessing the monetary forfeiture amount, the FCC noted that it must also take into account the statutory factors set forth in Section 503(b)(2)(E) of the Communications Act, "which include the nature, circumstances, extent, and gravity of the violations, and with respect to the violator, the degree of culpability, any history of prior offenses, ability to pay, and other such matters as justice may require." Rubash has until January 4, 2013 to pay the $10,000 fine or file a written statement seeking reduction or cancellation of the proposed forfeiture.

NASA Now Accepting Applications for Hosting a Real-Time Conversation with ISS Crewmembers

NASA is now accepting proposals from US schools, museums, science centers and community youth organizations -- individually or working together -- to host an Amateur Radio on the International Space Station (**ARISS**) contact between May 1, 2013 and November 1, 2013. To maximize these radio contact opportunities, NASA is looking for organizations that will draw large numbers of participants and integrate the contact into a well-developed education plan. Radio contacts are approximately 10 minutes in length. ARISS contacts are supported by the program's US partners -- the ARRL and **AMSAT** -- and their member volunteers, as well as other international space agencies and Amateur Radio partners. Proposals are due January 28, 2013.

Interested parties can visit the **ARRL website** or the **NASA Teaching From Space website** for information about proposal requirements and how to submit a proposal, as well as links to audio and video of archived contacts. Five information sessions are also available for groups who are considering submitting an ARISS proposal. Access to the Internet and a telephone line are required to connect to a session. Information on how to sign up for these sessions is available on the ARRL and NASA websites.

FITSAT-1 Satellite to Flash LEDs Over the US and Europe

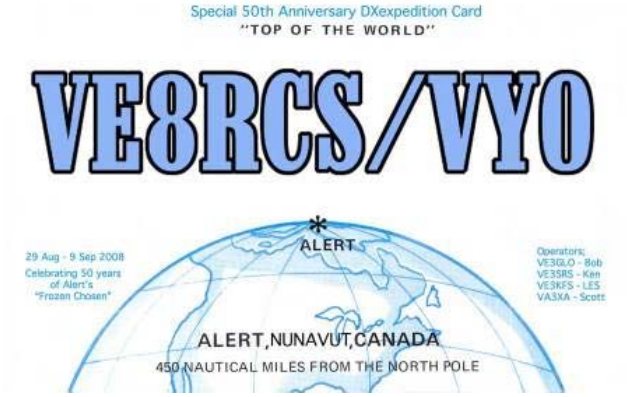
On December 12 and 13 the **FITSAT-1** CubeSat will be sending Morse code by flashing its array of super-bright LEDs. Depending on local conditions, the light may be visible to the naked eye and will be easily visible through binoculars. The LEDs will send "HI DE NIWAKA JAPAN."

The satellite will be visible over the eastern half of the United States on the morning of December 12. The LEDs will flash for two minutes **starting at 0614 UTC**. Europeans will get their chance at 2210 UTC on December 13.

FITSAT-1 was developed by students at the Fukuoka Institute of Technology (FIT) in Japan. As well as the optical LED experiment the satellite carries several Amateur Radio payloads: a CW beacon on 437.250 MHz, a telemetry beacon on 437.445 MHz and a high-speed data downlink on 5840.0 MHz.

More FITSAT tracking information is available at **http://www.satflare.com/track.php?q=fitsat#MAP**.

--Our thanks to Trevor, M5AKA, AMSAT-UK



PLEASE RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP

VACA VALLEY RADIO CLUB, INC.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION / RENEWAL FORM

Please Print & Fill in Completely — Dues are delinquent January 1st

Name: _____ Call Sign_____
Street: _____
City: _____Zip: _____
Phone: (_____) _____-_____OK to Publish ?(_____)
License Class: _____ ARRL Member ?(_____)
E-Mail Address_____

FAMILY Member (Spouse or Children)

Name: _____ Call Sign_____
License Class: _____ARRL Member ?(_____)
Name: _____ Call Sign_____
License Class: _____ARRL Member ?(_____)
Name: _____ Call Sign_____
License Class: _____ARRL Member ?(_____)

MEMBER Dues --------- $20.00 _____
Each Family Member -- $ 2.00 _____
Student ---------- $ 5.00 _____
Repeater/Autopatch donation --- _____
Call/Name badge -------- $10.00 _____
Optional ARRL membership
ARRL dues---------- $37.00 _____

Total---------- _____
Paid by CASH: ____ Check #_____
DATE:_____

Mail to : Vaca Valley Radio Club, PO Box 143, Elmira, CA 95625-0143